

BRIEFING NOTES

NAME OF GROUP:	PLANNING COMMISSION
DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF MEETING:	Wednesday, March 6, 2013, 12:00 p.m., Room 113, County-City Building, 555 S. 10 th Street, Lincoln, Nebraska
MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Greg Butcher, Michael Cornelius, Wendy Francis, Leirion Gaylor Baird, Chris Hove, Jeanelle Lust and Lynn Sunderman. Ken Weber absent.
OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:	Thomas Shafer, Dennis Bartels and Scott Opfer of Public Works; Terry Genrich of Parks & Recreation; Dallas McGee and Halle Salem of Urban Development; Marvin Krout, David Cary, Steve Henrichsen, David Pesnichak, Paul Barnes and Michele Abendroth of the Planning Department.
STATED PURPOSE OF MEETING:	City of Lincoln Sidewalk and Pedestrianway Policies

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 p.m. The Nebraska Open Meetings Act was acknowledged.

Sidewalk and Pedestrianway Policies

Cary began by explaining that today's presentation will focus on the Comprehensive Plan, healthy living and the specifics of the subdivision ordinance and design standards.

The guidance in the Comprehensive Plan states that walking is part of daily life. We have a longstanding policy of requiring sidewalks on both sides of all City streets. We have a very good and complete sidewalk network. The Comp Plan also states that the transportation plan should be multi-modal. We need to conduct adequate maintenance of our sidewalks and facilities as well. It also states that we must identify dedicated funding for sidewalks and facilities. We need to build up the system so people can get where they want safely and conveniently. There is also language in the Comp Plan about healthy living, and a good transportation system is part of active and healthy living.

Pesnichak stated that the Comp Plan talks a lot about healthy living. If you live in a neighborhood that does not have sidewalks, you are less likely to walk. Reasons for sidewalks are to help lower the obesity rate, for safety considerations, to increase property values, and to provide choice in transportation. There has been a lot of forward thinking in Lincoln that has created a very good sidewalk network. In 1952, it was put in law that sidewalks had to be on both sides of the streets. In the center core of Lincoln, there is a very heavy network of sidewalks. There is a lower density of sidewalks in the perimeter. In 1952, you can start to see the effects of the regulations put in place, as the number of sidewalks starts to increase again.

Pesnichak explained that the 1952 regulations also limited the block length. This helped to make walking more attractive. It also laid out the pedestrianways and easements. There is a process to

request waivers of required improvements. Approximately 12% of required easements are waived. He also noted that design standards were adopted in 2006 and state that sidewalks in commercial and industrial areas are required.

Pesnichak stated that the multi-use system works hand in hand with the sidewalks, especially when it comes to cycling. Bicyclists use the sidewalks to reach their end destination as well as pedestrians using it for their primary infrastructure to get to their destination. Cary provided an example near Maxey School of how the network system works together to provide different modes of transportation for students to get to school.

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) includes a repair program that is currently funded at \$500,000 annually in the two-year budget and is scheduled to increase to \$1 million annually in two years.

Francis asked how sidewalk repair is prioritized. Cary stated that Public Works has a multi-layered approach. They have the City broken down in areas by the age of the sidewalks. They have a process identified for staging of repairs in neighborhoods. Francis stated that she sees sidewalks being replaced a little at a time in her neighborhood. Cary explained that another factor is that sidewalks are replaced on a complaint-based system as well. These repairs are also done by private contractors in some cases.

Gaylor Baird asked how they prioritize which sidewalks are repaired given the limited funding. Shafer stated that ADA is first. And then after that, it is based on sidewalks with greater than ½" separation. It is also on a complaint system and who is on the list first. In response to Francis' concern about work being done a little at a time, sidewalk repair is used as fill-in work and not working in certain locations during peak rush hour.

Scheer asked about the reasons a waiver is granted. Cary stated that the basic information in determining a waiver is how the block is laid out and the pedestrian easement. There are many reasons such as a physical barrier like a grade change, a creek, or a railroad. There may also be a connection planned in the future. Henrichsen stated that the waivers go back many years to when sidewalks were not required. Gaylor Baird stated that many of the waivers are because an applicant states that their neighbor does not have a sidewalk and questions why they have to put one in. The Commission is trying to get more consistent about requiring sidewalks so we can piece together the sidewalks. Sunderman questioned if it is fair to require a family to put in a sidewalk on an infill house when they are trying to reinvest in the neighborhood. Butcher stated that we have no recourse for houses that are already built. Krout stated that we look at this on a case by case basis, and there are different circumstances for not requiring sidewalks.

Krout commented that the average block length in the inner part of the city is much shorter than in the outer parts of the city. We have talked about having a shorter block standard. That is more cost for the developer. They have not made that proposal, but as communities consider walkability, shorter block lengths are a good standard.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:48 p.m.

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